

Claims:

1-29. (Cancelled)

30. (New) A method of making a configuration change in a local area network (LAN) comprising a plurality of data ports and a visual indicator adjacent to each data port in at least a subset of the plurality of data ports, the method comprising:

providing instructions to insert a patch cord into or remove a patch cord from a first data port of the subset of the plurality of data ports; and

of the visual indicators adjacent to the data ports, altering a state of only the visual indicator adjacent to the first data port after the instructions to insert the patch cord into or remove the patch cord from the first data port have been correctly completed, the state being altered before subsequent instructions to insert the patch cord into or remove the patch cord from a second data port have been completed.

31. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising withholding the subsequent instructions until the instructions have been correctly completed.

32. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein the state is altered only after the instructions have been correctly completed.

33. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising:
providing the subsequent instructions after the instructions have been correctly completed, the second data port belonging to the subset of the plurality of data ports; and
of the visual indicators adjacent to the data ports, altering a state of only the visual indicator adjacent to the second data port after the subsequent instructions have been correctly completed.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, further comprising activating the visual indicator associated the second data port only after the instructions have been correctly completed.

35. (New) The method of claim 33, further comprising activating the visual indicators adjacent to the first and second data ports prior to the patch cord being inserted into or removed from the first data port.

36. (New) The method of claim 33, further comprising, of the visual indicators adjacent to the first and second data ports, activating only the visual indicator adjacent to the first data port prior to the patch cord being inserted into or removed from the first data port.

37. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising altering the state differently depending on whether the instructions have been correctly or incorrectly completed.

38. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising altering a state of a visual indicator on the patch cord at least one of in same manner or at the same time as a visual indicator not on the patch cord.

39. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising providing a plurality of visual indicator states that are different from each other and that include a first visual indicator state before insertion into the first data port, a second visual indicator state before removal from the first data port, a third visual indicator state after correct insertion into the first data port, and a fourth visual indicator state after incorrect removal from the first data port.

40. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising targeting only data ports having activated visual indicators, the targeting comprising:
scanning the data ports having activated visual indicators;
analyzing the data ports having activated visual indicators to determine whether the instructions or the subsequent instructions have been correctly or incorrectly completed; and
limiting at least one of the scanning and analyzing to only the data ports having activated visual indicators.

41. (New) The method of claim 40, further comprising initiating the targeting from scanning and analysis of at least all data ports using a manually-activated input.

42. (New) The method of claim 40, further comprising automatically terminating the targeting and returning to scanning and analysis of at least all data ports.

43. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising:
providing directions to a general location of the first data port; and
activating the visual indicator adjacent to the first data port only after an end of the patch cord is inserted into a local system port at the general location or an IM port of a portable information module (IM), the local system port having a different functionality than any of the data ports.

44. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the end of the patch cord to be inserted into the first data port and an end of the patch cord to be inserted into the local system port or IM port are the same.

45. (New) The method of claim 43, further comprising providing additional directions to the first data port after the end of the patch cord is inserted into the local system port or the IM port.

46. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising:
providing directions to a general location of the first data port; and
altering the state only after an end of the patch cord is inserted into a local system port at the general location or an IM port of a portable information module (IM), the local system port having a different functionality than any of the data ports.

47. (New) The method of claim 46, wherein the end of the patch cord inserted into the local system port or IM port and an end of the patch cord inserted into the first data port are different.

48. (New) The method of claim 46, further comprising providing additional directions to the first data port after the end of the patch cord is inserted into the local system port or the IM port.

49. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising initiating determination of whether the instructions have been correctly completed using a manually-activated input.

50. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising limiting directions to the first data port to a general location until a manually-activated input is activated.

51. (New) A method of transferring a patch cord between a first data port and a second data port in a local area network (LAN) to the second data port and a third data port in the LAN, the method comprising:

at least one of:

automatically determining whether the patch cord is an appropriate length for establishing a connection between the second and third data ports before the patch cord is removed from the first data port; or

providing a manually-activated input to indicate that the patch cord is not the appropriate length for establishing the connection between the second and third data ports; and

providing different instructions depending on whether the patch cord is or is not the appropriate length.

52. (New) The method of claim 51, wherein the manually-activated input is disposed on a portable device.

53. (New) The method of claim 51, further comprising providing the different instructions independent of whether the acknowledgment is activated before the patch cord is removed from the first data port or after the patch cord is removed from the first data port and before the patch cord is inserted into the third data port.

54. (New) The method of claim 51, further comprising indicating an optimal patch cord length if the patch cord is not the appropriate length.

55. (New) The method of claim 51, further comprising providing fewer instructions if the patch cord is the appropriate length than if the patch cord is not the appropriate length.

56. (New) A method of making a configuration change in a system comprising a visual indicator and a local area network (LAN) containing a plurality of data ports, the visual indicator separable from the data ports, the method comprising:

providing instructions to insert a patch cord into or remove a patch cord from a first data port of the plurality of data ports;

altering a state of only the separable visual indicator only after the instructions to insert the patch cord into or remove the patch cord from the first data port have been correctly completed, the state being altered before subsequent instructions to alter a connection of the patch cord with a second data port have been completed; and

withholding the subsequent instructions until the instructions have been correctly completed.

57. (New) The method of claim 56, further comprising:

providing directions to a general location of at least one of the first or second data port; and

providing further directions to the at least one of the first or second data port only after an end of the patch cord is inserted into a local system port at the general location or an IM port of a portable information module (IM), the local system port having a different functionality than any of the data ports.

58. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the patch cord comprises the separable visual indicator.

59. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein a portable device comprises the separable visual indicator, the portable device further comprising a display and a manually-activated input.

60. (New) A portable information module (IM) comprising:

a display configured to display instructions regarding an addition, removal, or transfer to be performed in a local area network (LAN), the instructions including patch cord length information, whether to replace a patch cord providing a current LAN connection with a different patch cord for a new LAN connection, and at least one of: a port number of a port associated with insertion or removal of the patch cord to be performed, a location of the port, a location of a rack in which the port is located, or a map of the entire LAN or a section of the LAN in which the insertion or removal is to be performed;

an LED configured to indicate that new instructions at least one of: have been provided or are accessible on the display; and

at least one of a button or key configured to at least one of: acknowledge that instructions displayed on the display have been received or indicate that the patch cord providing the current LAN connection does not meet specifications for the new LAN connection.

61. (New) A revision system comprising:

a local area network (LAN) containing a rack having a plurality of data ports and a system port having a different functionality than the data ports;

a computer processor connected with the data ports through a scanner and connected with the system ports;

at least one of:

the computer processor being configured to automatically determine whether a patch cord connecting first and second data ports is an appropriate length for connecting the second data port and a third data port before the patch cord is removed from the first data port; or

a manually-activated input configured to indicate that the patch cord is not the appropriate length for connecting the second and third data ports; and

a display configured to display different instructions depending on whether the patch cord is or is not the appropriate length.

62. (New) The revision system of claim 61, further comprising at least one of a portable information module or a probe, the manually-activated input disposed on the at least one of the portable information module or the probe.

63. (New) A portable probe comprising:
a housing;
a probe cable extending from the housing and having a probe plug at a remote end, the probe plug configured to cooperate with a system outlet of a rack in a local area network (LAN);
a probe element configured to provide contact with the LAN through a different type of connector than the probe plug;
a display on the housing configured to convey information about at least one of the revision system, revision steps, or patch cord specifications during a revision process;
at least one of a button or key configured to input information to the system;
a signal light having different states to indicate at least one of the presence of new instructions on the display or whether a patch cord plug has been correctly inserted into or removed from a data port of the rack; and
an illumination light configured to illuminate an area adjacent to the probe element.

64. (New) The portable probe of claim 63, wherein the probe comprises a single probe element configured to cooperate with both a port plate of the rack and a plug plate of the patch cord plug.

65. (New) The portable probe of claim 63, wherein the probe comprises a first probe element to cooperate with only a port plate of the rack and a second probe element to cooperate with only a plug plate of the patch cord plug.

66. (New) The portable probe of claim 65, wherein the probe elements emanate from different places in the housing.

67. (New) The portable probe of claim 65, wherein the probe elements diverge from a common connector to the housing.